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SOME PROBLEMS IN SOVIET-AMERICAN WAR
TERMINATION: CROSS/CULTURAL ASYMMETRIES

BY

ROBERT B. BATHURST

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<p>The analysis of the process of war termination cannot be understood as a logical one. Cultural preconceptions historically override logic in war. Cultural values manifest themselves as signs and are conveyed through signals. An enormous problem is how to interpret another culture's signals. This paper presents some of the major asymmetries in theories of war and its termination between the U.S. and Soviet Union. It provides a kind of checklist of dangerous misconceptions and their consequences. Applying some of the concepts of political culture to the current state of Soviet military science, it predicts how Soviet military thought will be affected by <i>perestroika</i>. Using the same techniques, it proposes, for purposes of war termination the creation of a "shadow" American politburo, a trained group to mirror image Soviet conceptions of American power. Also, it proposes using strategic culture to game Soviet war termination in advance.</p>				
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Some Problems in Soviet-American War Termination:
Cross/Cultural Asymmetries

Are all thy conquests,
Glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure?
Shakespeare

Introduction

This paper explores the problems of interpreting cross-cultural signals (semiotics) about war and war termination through the method of analysis of strategic (politico/military) cultures. In doing so, it provides a possible basis for prediction of some aspects of the Soviet/American military competition in the uncertain period of perestroyka.

The methodology of this approach is experimental. Its usefulness depends upon raising new and important insights into the most critical problem the world might face. Its excuse is that it explores some intellectual territory not frequently examined in studies of war termination, departing from the studies which tend to be based on the structure, logic and preconceptions of Western strategic culture.¹

¹ As Keith Dunn wrote about the papers presented at a conference on the subject: "The major conclusion that can be drawn from the conference dialogue which generated this volume, and from the papers that appear in this book, is that U.S. thought concerning conflict termination is not well developed or coherent." Keith A. Dunn, "The Missing Link in Conflict Termination Thought: Strategy," Conflict Termination and Military Strategy: Coercion, Persuasion and War, Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn, editors, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), p. 175.

As the purpose of such an investigation is to increase our ability in military prediction and control, we will use the method of examining, especially, cultural asymmetries, areas in which a concept (war termination itself, for example) in one society distorts its mirror-image in another. Jacob Kipp expressed the idea exactly in writing that:

Socio-political asymmetries give rise to doctrinal and strategic asymmetries, and in the Soviet view the side which succeeds in imposing its vision upon the future will have used foresight and forecasting decisively, even if the competing systems never shift from deterrence and low intensity conflict to war-fighting.²

The Cultural Relativity of War Termination

The vast Western literature on "war termination" and the comparative Soviet silence on the subject tells us something important about the concept: it is obviously culturally relative. That means, of course, that ideas and conceptions in one culture do not translate into another outside of their context.

As the U.S. strategic culture is, using Edward Hall's classification, a minimal-context one³, and the Soviet strategic

² Jacob W. Kipp, "The Methodology of Foresight and Forecasting in Soviet Military Affairs," (Fort Leavenworth: Soviet Army Studies Office, undated), p. 26.

³ Edward Hall, the anthropologist, uses the terms "high and low context" to classify cultures. The Soviet Union is a high context culture which means, in part, that it prefers to consider phenomena in their connectedness; the U.S. is a low-context culture, on the whole, which means that it prefers to consider phenomena in their separateness. The categories are not meant to be judgmental but merely descriptions of how a culture tends to interpret reality. Because "high" and "low" tend to imply values, I have preferred to use "multi" and "minimal" context, but the words are meant to convey Edward Hall's ideas. See Edward Hall, Beyond Culture, (New York: Anchor Books, 1976.)

culture is a multi-context one, there is a high degree of probability of error in the predictions of one culture about the other. The consequences of misunderstood signals in trying to terminate a war could be catastrophic. (The recent revelations at a Moscow conference on the Cuban missile crisis of the US-USSR-Cuban miscalculations and misinterpretations of intentions provide evidence of the inter-cultural problems of signalling.⁴

Although this paper is specifically about the problems of war termination relative to Soviet and American military cultures, it is also necessarily about the problems one culture has in interpreting the signs of another. War termination, when it is less than obliteration of the enemy, is a semiotic process; that is, it depends upon interpreting signals. For that to happen, equivalents in cultural understanding, not just in words, must be transmitted and received. (Is a warning shot across the bow an alarm or a misfire?)

For example, a navy is an elaborate semiotic system in addition to being a weapon; however, in their cultural contexts, the American and Soviet navies operate differently. In the Soviet Navy where the culture emphasizes secretiveness and surprise, the primary weapon is the submarine. In the U.S. Navy, where the culture emphasizes visible signs, the primary weapon is the aircraft carrier. The Maritime Strategy in its explicit advertisement of intentions, conveyed a set of signals in a

⁴ "Atom Warheads Deployed in Cuba in '62, Soviets Say," New York Times, January 29, 1989, p. 1.



A-1

public way which the Soviet navy, in its own semiotic context, could not have done. (There could not be secret naval war plans divorced from a larger strategy.)

One of the ambiguities of war termination in modern conditions, especially in Soviet thought where surprise plays the crucial role, is that, semiotically, the war is ended, conceptually, when it is decided to fire the first salvo. The Soviets, facing enemies superior in technology throughout much of their history, have understood that if a first strike must be initiated, it must be both a surprise and a decisive blow. The decision to take such a step, they have repeatedly said, is tantamount to putting an end to civilization as we know it. Thus it is essential that the context which gives signals, such as the Maritime Strategy, meaning are understood in each culture.

While the design of a navy, as well as all armed forces, is the result of a far more complex process than the relatively obvious, but fiercely debated, connections with national character, still there are identifiable signals which are obvious. Changes in ship construction will be among the first signs of the new Soviet military doctrine that is now being formed. However, these naval signals, in the past, have often been mistaken. For example, the Soviet naval out-of-area voyages that began in the 60's and the construction of large ASW cruisers were part of the search for parity and a means of supporting the Brezhnev Doctrine but not, as was so often thought, an attempt to seize control of

the seas. ("Sea control" comes from Western strategic culture, not Soviet.)⁵

Strategic Culture as Method

Fortunately, political (including strategic/military) culture is being more and more widely used as one of the tools to analyze the Soviet armed forces and their doctrine. This comes at a critical time of major change in Soviet political life. Just on May 15, 1988 when Soviet troops no longer pretended to protect the "gains" of socialism in Afghanistan, it became probable that the Brezhnev Doctrine, the most specific ideological evidence of the "threat", was no longer operative. Further evidence for this revision was given by the Soviet Foreign Minister, E. A. Shevernadze, who said, "The struggle between two opposing systems is no longer the defining tendency of the present era."⁶ The Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Ministry of Defense have announced a doctrine of building forces only to the point of sufficiency.⁷

As these ideas represent radical change in a society which has been among the world's most resistant to innovation, they can

⁵ Robert W. Herrick, "Roles and Missions of the Soviet Navy: Historical Evolution, Current Priorities, and Future Prospects," The Soviet and Other Communist Navies, ed. James L. George, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1985), p. 31.

⁶ Pravda, July 26, 1988, p. 4.

⁷ D. T. Yazov, Na strazhe sotsializma i mira, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987), p. 4.

most accurately be assessed through the lens of political culture. While no one can say for certain which personalities will triumph in the emerging new ruling elite, (conspiracy, secrecy, and control are three traditional characteristics of Soviet political culture), it is possible, on the basis of the cultural cycles of hundreds of years of Russian, and decades of Soviet, political life to predict the main probabilities. We can say for certain, for example, that the reforms will be introduced from above and that when they meet resistance, the old forms of repression will be renewed. The manner in which General Secretary Gorbachev removed Andrei Gromyko and assumed his position illustrates this perfectly. Russia has, after all, a three hundred year old history of trying Western reforms, from Peter I to Lenin, Khrushchev and now Gorbachev. There is ample historical precedent for predicting a strong, repressive reaction when the current efforts have either failed or run their course.

What we are emphasizing here is the structure and form in which a culture functions more than its content, the forms that determine the limits within which new ideas are likely to occur. This is an especially useful approach during times like these in the Soviet Union. If we make estimates on the basis of what we assume is the most "reasonable" development, then we are mirror-imaging and will be wrong. If, however, we make estimates on the basis of the forms within which the Soviet military establishment operates, then we will more likely be right since we will be

dealing with the limits within which Soviets have traditionally behaved.

This approach has been called by Margaret Mead "studying cultures at a distance" and although our distance from Gorbachev's Russia is by no means as great as was Margaret Mead's from Stalin's Russia, we are still confronted by the very significant problems of understanding a heretofore secretive empire in transition. To reestablish our bearings, we can use the ideas from political culture which studies patterns or styles in war, national signals and their cross/cultural interpretation.⁸

Modes of Thought

The differences between the two modes of thought in terms of ideology could hardly be more extreme. For example, Soviets, in the Russian messianic tradition, naturally seek global solutions. Coming from a multi-context position, they estimate their security as depending upon the world system changing to a more compatible structure. Even now in the period of perestroyka,

⁸ The basic method for studying cultures at a distance was developed and adapted to the Soviet Union by Margaret Mead and a group of brilliant anthropologists and political scientists and reported in Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Problems of Soviet Character, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1951.) Nathan Leites was the coordinator of this program and published in the same year his seminal work, The Operational Code of the Politburo, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1951.) Many consider The Operational Code the most significant single system for predicting Soviet behavior.

Gorbachev, while modifying traditional Bolshevik aggressiveness, argues for changing the world systems of security.⁹

Surprise, in the sense of seizing the initiative and dumfounding the opposition, is a constant in Soviet military, or negotiating, strategies. That idea, antedating the Nazi Blitzkrieg in Soviet military art, is common to all military science. But in Soviet strategic culture, where secrecy, deception and the compartmentation of knowledge have played all-pervading roles, the concept of "surprise" has a structural significance. It is a part of Russian weltanschauung. It is one of the many psychological techniques which the Soviets, and before them the Russians, developed to equalize the odds in contests with enemies superior in strength.

Thus Gorbachev's acceptance of the need for thorough disarmament inspection at the 27th Party Congress was a signal that a major doctrinal change was already under way not only in military but also in political thought.¹⁰

The idea of "surprise" is a sign in Soviet strategic culture illustrating a significant differences between it and the U.S. military culture. "Surprise" requires major sudden shifts and can be used on the political, economic or military levels. Politically as well as militarily, it is one of the signs of how the Soviets try to change the balance of power. The U.S., on the

⁹ M. S. Gorbachev, "Politicheskiy doklad Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS XXVII s'ezdy Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo soyuza", (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986), p. 95.

¹⁰ Ibid., p., 85.

other hand, operating more often statically, uses surprise comparatively less--The Maritime Strategy, for example--and calculations of strength comparatively more.

The dynamic/static dichotomy is another frequent structural difference between the two cultures. Soviet thought tends to analyze history in terms of an ever-evolving conflict. Therefore, the Soviet view of the world is one of an inherently unstable reality. In contrast, the U.S., as frequently observed, struggles to maintain the status quo.

The way in which this dichotomy causes views of war termination to differ is significant. Whereas in the U.S. literature, the end of a war is treated as a specific condition which can be defined in time and place, in Soviet thought, war ends with a transformation of society. Thus, for Soviets, the idea of war termination is inherent in the idea of politics. It is the aim of policy as well as war, the transformation of society, the very process of civilization.

In U.S. thought, war termination has a narrower meaning. It is the product of specific forces. Its dimension in time is monochronic where as the Soviet concept is polychronic. Perhaps it is for this reason that it is so difficult to discuss the Soviet view of war termination. The idea cannot easily be separated out from the process of the evolution of the world order, whereas, in the American concept, the idea can be endlessly discussed as the product of an equation in which the numbers are constantly changed.

Another contrast between the two is in the political demands on human life and endurance. The difference between our two cultures was important during the years of the strategy of Massive Retaliation since that doctrine assumed that war termination would follow predictable losses. The temptation was, of course, to project American values onto the Soviets, although the cultures function at opposite extremes of the scale.

The Germans were constantly astonished, in the First and the Second World Wars, at the Russian tolerance for the intolerable, at the loss of life they would accept for minor gains such as parachute jumps without parachutes in the defense of Moscow and infantry attacks without rifles or ammunition.¹¹ In the Mongolian campaign against the Japanese in 1945, Marshal Zhukov's feat in Khakin Gol in 1938 of attacking across "impassable" terrain was repeated by Soviet forces over the Great Khighan Mountains.

By identifying these patterns as structural components (the unconscious values which determine the Soviet view of reality), we increase our ability to predict Soviet behavior, especially at the extremes, such as in war termination. For example, Uri Ra'anani has argued that Soviet maneuver in the Middle East wars provided "almost textbook cases of Soviet behavior in war

¹¹ A fascinating study of the German evaluation of Soviet operations in World War II is contained in Donald S. Detwiler, ed., World War II German Military Studies, A Garland Series in 24 volumes, 1979, (no publisher listed), Library of Congress number D757.W67. And see for example, B. H. Liddell Hart, (ed.), The Red Army, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958.)

(initiation and) termination."¹² The game plan for the Soviet non-combat phase is largely positional: to make it clear that checkmate is inevitable. His characterization of Soviet behavior--maximum bluster with little risk, safe fall-back positions, massing hardware, etc.--follows closely the paradigm Nathan Leites illustrated in his seminal work, The Operational Code of the Politburo.¹³ Margaret Mead in Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority and Edward Keenan in his article, "Russian Political Folkways," provided additional confirmation of the possibility of predicting Soviet decisions both for war and its end.¹⁴ They demonstrated that there is a Soviet view of reality, very different from that in the West, which dictates many Soviet decisions. That this has not been perceived in the past has led to many dangerous and expensive miscalculations, according to Colin Gray.¹⁵ The dominant idea, both in academia and the military, was that "other cultures either share, or will come to share, American values and strategic ideas."¹⁶

¹² Uri Ra'anan, "Signals of War Termination", Ending a Nuclear War: Are the Superpowers Ready?, Ed. S. Cimbala and J. Douglass, (London: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987), p. 281.

¹³ Nathan Leites, The Operational Code of the Politburo, (Santa Monica: Rand Corp., 1951.)

¹⁴ Margaret Mead, Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979,) and Edward Keenan, "Russian Political Folkways," The Russian Review, July 1986.

¹⁵ Colin Gray, Nuclear Strategy and National Style, (Washington: DNA Report 5814F-1, 1981), p. 96.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 97.

In part, this is attributable to the different cultural structures of thought. For example, victory in U.S. thought tends to be perceived as a kind of technological accomplishment. Our annual military estimates reflect that position with their emphasis on comparative weapons capabilities and their avoidance of ultimate political arrangements. Victory for the Soviets tends to be perceived as a sociopolitical accomplishment in which historical processes are stabilized.

Soviet Military Thought

The course and termination of war, in Soviet military science, has been dependent upon certain factors and perceptions which remained, for many years, quite constant and which have not been renounced. The fundamental principle for the study of war and its termination is based upon war as a reflection of its dependence on its political goals. This basic proposition derives:

....from the fact that the place and role of war in the life of society is determined by the politics of the classes and governments conducted before and during the war.¹⁷

The implications of this theory, of course, are that Western, especially U.S. political intentions are unceasingly aggressive. This could hardly be stated more clearly than by Admiral Gorshkov¹⁸ in his preface to a book on the Soviet Navy:

¹⁷ M. M. Kiryan, Problemy voennoy teorii v sovetskikh nauchno-spravochnykh izdaniyakh, (Moscow: Nauka, 1985), p. 134.

"Discussion of the presumably defensive character of the American SDI program, putting weapons in space, is, of course, a fairy-tale for the naive. The strategy is to try to paralyze the Soviet strategic weapons in order to have the capability to make an unanswered attack on our country."¹⁹

The second set of laws governing the possibilities for the conduct and termination of war undoubtedly have a direct bearing on the decision to adopt the doctrine of sufficient defense, for they deal with the rear, the productive capacity of a people and its industry. The extensive literature on the period of stagnation, the problems of manpower, the lag in high-technology and the economic crisis of the rear has its reflection in military writing. The element of technology, industry, production and science has been considered since Frunze the most critical in determining the nature and outcome of war. Marshal Ogarkov took up this theme in the 70's when he warned of the consequences of stagnation:

It is particularly important to understand the dialectical process of developing military affairs at the present stage, under conditions of rapid scientific and technological progress. Tardiness in restructuring views and stagnation in working out and implementing new questions of military art and construction are fraught with serious consequence.²⁰

Current Soviet War Doctrine

¹⁹ N. P. V'yunenko, et al., Voenno-morskoy flot: Rol', perspektivy razvitiya, ispol'zovanie, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1988), p. 10.

²⁰ N. V. Ogarkov, in his Istoriya uchit bditelnosti, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985), pp. 52-54, discusses the importance of the dialectical law of the negation of the negation on military construction and equipment. The iron law is, of course, that he who falls behind is negated.____

The study of the ways in which a war between the Soviet Union and the United States might be terminated cannot proceed very far without some information about the nature of the war each side expects to fight, the leaders in power, the power centers in the government and some estimate of the political culture of the enemy. At the present time, with respect to the Soviet Union, the answers to all of these questions, except for the political doctrine, are either in doubt or being revised.

Victory in terms of the doctrine which is now being debated and replaced in the Soviet Union consisted of destroying an enemy's ability to make war and controlling [occupying] his centers of power. That this remained the military doctrine into 1988 is confirmed in the book Navy with Admiral Gorshkov as the editor. It describes the objectives of war as:

The political goals of war, as a rule, cannot be reached and its victorious issue cannot be accomplished without the destruction of the basic groupings of the armed forces of the enemy and the occupation of all or a significant part of its territory.²¹

The kind of operation necessary to achieve this was decidedly offensive although from the Soviet political point of view it was defensive, a bit of "doublespeak" routinely derided in the West. An enemy, according to what was then called the Brezhnev Doctrine after his speech in Prague, 1968, was anyone who challenged the gains of socialism. The defense of those gains was an historical imperative and therefore dialectically dic-

²¹ V'yunenکو, p. 41.

tated. But in terms of strategic culture, security was also related to the space soviets needed to protect themselves from weapons with long ranges.

Under the new Gorbachev thinking of non-provocative defense, first unmistakably promulgated by the Warsaw Pact by the Political Consultative Committee in May 1987²², the nature of victory in a war with NATO is unclear. While it can be confidently assumed that the new concepts--militarily ambiguous at any level, even when explained by the Soviet Minister of Defense Yazov to the U.S. Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci in March 1988--will only very slowly, perhaps never, be translated into distinctively defensive operations and new weapons by the General Staff, they nevertheless result from a revolutionary shift in Soviet political thought which directly impacts upon Soviet military doctrine and specifically, upon ideas of war termination

In the now 70 year reign of Leninist political thinking, the idea of permanent struggle--and therefore war--was central. In fact, Lenin foresaw the need for "defensive wars" conducted by an already victorious socialism, specifically "the defense of a victorious proletariat against the bourgeoisie of other countries."²³ And he defined as just and lawful wars those fought for socialism, "for the liberation of other peoples from the bourge-

²² See "On the Military Doctrine of the Members of the Warsaw Pact," Krasnaya zvezda, May 30, 1987, p. 1.

²³ V. I. Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1963) vol. 30, p. 133.

oisie."²⁴ This was the central core of Soviet military thought and, to a significant degree, the inspiration for the West's estimate of the Soviet threat.

New Thinking

The dimensions of the changes that have occurred can only begin to be understood because they challenge some of the structures of Russian political culture--authoritarianism, centralization, and secrecy, for example. One stunning example of the change in political doctrine was General Secretary and President Gorbachev's address to the United Nations, in December 1988. Not only did he not mention Lenin--and in Soviet political culture what is not said can be more important than what is said) but also he all but consigned the idea of permanent class war to the scrap heap of history. The new era of national relations "requires de-ideologizing relations among states," he said and, speaking as the head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the cradle of socialism, he must have shocked the Marxist world when he said that "We are, of course, far from claiming to be in possession of the ultimate truth."²⁵ In terms of Soviet political culture, that meant an acknowledgement of the weakening of the power of the state.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ M. S. Gorbachev, Speech to the United Nations General Assembly, December 7, 1988, quoted in the New York Times, December 8, 1988, p. A6.

²⁶ See Keenan, op. cit.

That was political "new thinking". By 1985 when Gorbachev became the General Secretary, the Soviet military establishment was facing a crisis similar to that of 1955 when rockets and missiles were incorporated into military art. Soviet thinkers take their military science seriously and the fact that they could not solve the problem of how to use nuclear weapons, either politically or militarily, in a modern war with the West, led to some serious conclusions which will be examined. The end result was that they experienced the reality of what Engels and Frunze had always argued that modern war depends upon the industrial base and theirs had fallen behind.²⁷ The arms race for the Soviet military, whose time orientation is to the future, was with the West's enormous technological capability and it was a race which a command economy, even supported by brilliantly successful industrial and military espionage, could not be sure of winning.

The failure to win even a little war in primitive Afghanistan may have caused the paradigmatic shift that ushered the Soviet leadership into a new reality. And in a multi-context centralized culture, major change in one category leads to major change in all categories. The new thinking would ultimately affect the Soviet doctrine on war and therefore of war termination.

²⁷ M. V. Frunze, Izbrannye proizvedeniya, Vol. II, (Moscow:Voenizdat, 1957) p. 6.

The ideas of perestroyka come not only from political forces but also from military-technical ones: that nuclear war especially but any war generally can no longer be a political instrument; that the devastation of modern, including conventional, war can be so great that it is obvious security can only be mutual; that defense is the only rational military doctrine; that defense requires a "reasonable" sufficiency of weapons which can be asymmetrical and should not be provocative; that "deterrence", when it means stockpiling weapons, has become as dangerous as war.²⁸ While considerable debate remains as to the specific meaning of these terms and the support that exists for them, there can be little doubt that the old military doctrine based upon the old world view will not survive.

Possible Soviet-U.S. Wars

The general line emerging in the Soviet Union, from Brezhnev's Tula speech of 1977 increasingly into the present is that nuclear war cannot be a rational instrument of policy.²⁹ Not only was the idea of nuclear war denounced by members of the party and government but also by the military. For example, the C-in-C of the Soviet Air Force, Marshal Kutakhov, repeated the same theme as early as 1983, saying that "....any aggressors'

²⁸ These ideas, later elaborated and interpreted by defense and government spokesmen, were quite clearly stated in Chapter IV, "Basic Goals and the Direction of the Party's Foreign Policy Strategy." See M. S. Gorbachev, "Politicheskiy doklad Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS XXVII s'ezdu Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo soyuza, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986), pp.80-90.

²⁹ L. I. Brezhnev, "Rech'", Pravda, Jan. 19, 1977, p. 2.

plan to unleash nuclear war and in doing so to gain victory are senseless.³⁰

The political denunciation of nuclear war was accompanied by a military realization that there was probably no successful strategy for winning such a war in Europe. The last solution to the problem, the idea of the OMG [operational maneuver group]--a rapid response, behind-the-lines attack group meant to take out nuclear capabilities--was probably judged, in the end, a fantasy solution for a sophisticated age. In any case, it could not survive in a doctrine of non-provocative defense and could be expected to retire.

After the Chernobyl disaster, the language became increasingly that, as used by Gorbachev, "of preventing the world from sliding towards nuclear catastrophe."³¹ The implication was that war, not being a rational instrument, would more than likely occur by accident.

However, one of the problems for the Soviets was that they did not estimate the American military thought as "scientific" and therefore predictable. The line was that it is "short-sighted, egoistic and adventuristic."³² The problem Gorbachev

³⁰ P. Kutakhov, "Current U.S. Threat to Peace," Patriynaya zhizn', May 19, 1983. Trans. JPRS 84119, no. 1789, 12 August 1983, pp. 17-24.

³¹ M. S. Gorbachev, "Speech at the 11th Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany," (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1986,) p. 10.

³² Ibid., p. 12.

seemed to think the Soviet Union faced was the possibility a nuclear war by accident resulting from the machinations of American militarists. Furthermore, the old distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons was seen as disappearing as the latter approximated the former in their destructiveness.³³ While there can be little doubt that Soviet arguments served to advance the "peace offensive" in Europe, there was still the heavy weight of paranoia. "It is no secret that scenarios for a nuclear strike against us do exist," Gorbachev complained.³⁴

There are signs that the idea of ending a war begun by accident is causing a change in Soviet doctrine. Although the establishment of the "Hot Line" in 1964 was a step in the direction of preventing war by miscalculation, its fundamental role was semiotic, to insure that the signals were properly translated. But for accidental war, there had to be a new Soviet doctrine.

In Marxist thought, there are no accidents. All, in Soviet terminology, is scientifically determined. Such a world view made it extremely awkward for Soviet military scientists to deal with the problem of an accidental war. What scientific and rational operations could be formulated for what would be a political catastrophe? The Soviet estimate of the irrationality, and ahistorical behavior, of the imperialist powers did seem to

³³ Ibid. 13.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 85.

provide a stratagem for escaping from the ideology to consider the danger of an accidental war. Classifying nuclear war as irrational and without political purpose was a convenient way of putting it outside of the dialectic, and therefore of the permanent class struggle. That seems to have led to a reassessment of the concept of class struggle under modern conditions and to an ideological revision:

....now that even the class conflicts within capitalist countries largely take place through the achievement of compromise within a mutually accepted legal framework rather than in the form of harsh confrontation.³⁵

The clarity and unanimity of the Soviet doctrine on the avoidance of nuclear war has been well documented.³⁶ But Soviet policy for fighting a nuclear war, should that awful surprise be launched, is equally unanimous. General Yazov explained it.

Our strategic nuclear forces are maintained in accordance with the principle of sufficiency for defense and within the limits of the existing military-strategic parity existing between the USSR and the USA. The essence of sufficiency is the requirement to prevent an unpunished nuclear attack under any, even the most unfortunate, circumstances.³⁶

That Western analysts distort the Soviet position, as General Yazov complained, may well be related to the political cultures of the two sides: the Soviets thinking in terms of process and the U. S. in its duality, either defense or offense.

³⁵ A. V. Kozyrev, op. cit., p. 17.

³⁶ See Stephen M. Meyer, "Soviet Nuclear Operations," in Ashton B. Carter, John D. Steinbruner and Charles A. Zraket, eds., Managing Nuclear Operations, (Washington, D. C.: Brookings, 1987), Chapter 15.

³⁶. Yazov, p. 35.

With respect to war termination, however, the point General Yazov is making, taking the totality of his position, is that the fact that the Soviet Union would doubt that the world would survive a nuclear war would not prevent it from launching a "devastating rebuff."

The Soviet Files

In view of the "new thinking", what has happened to the U.S. position on victory? Here, there is a problem. As our major aim in a war with the Soviet Union would not be to gain territory but to contain aggression and stop the spread of communism, we will be presented, if the Soviet Union remains on its present course, with few problems in war termination. With the Soviet Union adopting "non-provocative defense", "asymmetrical parity" and other new doctrinal concepts, our main task is semantic, to understand what is meant in the context of the new thinking but also in the context of the political culture.

Currently, Soviet strategic thought seems to be processed through four major files: 1) that marked Leninist/ideological; 2) political/diplomatic; 3) the military/technical; and 4) the geopolitical/historical/cultural. Although these are enormous and imprecise categories, we can demonstrate their usefulness in helping to clarify problems by applying them to the subject of Soviet/American war termination.

Under the first category, Leninist/ideological, there is not, properly speaking, a concept of war termination as conflict

is the fundamental law of existence. It is the basis of the elementary process of thought, the dialectic, and the basic method of analyzing society, through contradictions. Only after a mystical qualitative leap of the human kind, beyond some now very vague social and economic evolution, can we hope to have termination of human conflict. While it is becoming clear that the ideological dictatorship of Lenin is coming to an end in the Soviet Union, it is important to remember that for seventy years, every Soviet school boy has been trained to think in terms of the dialectic and to interpret foreign behavior through its lens. Therefore, there will be these shadow boxes into which Soviet analysts will undoubtedly file their observations for many years to come.

In terms of the second, political, category, war termination is a systemic concept since it signifies the victory of socialism. Alternative endings could not be publicly discussed, until glasnost' in any case. The idea of war termination in this category is quite simply the complete elimination of the opposition as a class through political and coercive means.

The third category, the military/technical, is thought of as a scientific one which fulfills a role frequently misunderstood in the West. The mistake is due to the mixture of contexts. The military in the Soviet Union is culturally, ideologically and socially a functional organization. That is, it serves politics with "scientific" solutions to the problems posed for it. It does not create grand strategy. Because the military writes

about how "to fight and win a nuclear war" does not mean that it is proposing one.

The assessment of Soviet military culture is fraught with mirror-imaging in part because we know so little about how it really works which facilitates the mind filling the gaps with "reasonable" assumptions. The mirror-imaging is inevitable since the organization of Soviet military thought, which is "scientific", multi-context, and ideological, does not fit the structure of American military thought, which tends to be technological and minimal context. The Soviets, who culturally assume that "superiority" and power are achieved in order to be used, see SDI as a dangerous American scheme; the U.S., mistaking the sincerity of Soviet statements about our intentions, assumes Soviet deception and propaganda.³⁷

The Maritime Strategy provides another example of the confusion this causes in the strategic culture. Because the Soviets project that the American military operates under the same controls as it does, they assume, almost certainly, that The Maritime Strategy was put forward by the American "ruling class" for, among other things, propaganda and disinformation. The military does not, it would argue, telegraph strategic plans in advance. Nor, in the Soviet view, would a military doctrine be promulgated for a major war which did not reflect a combined arms concept.

³⁷ A good example of misinterpretation and exaggeration is provided by N. V. Ogarkov in his History Teaches Vigilance, op. cit. pp. 88-89.

Because it was nearly impossible to make sense of The Strategy in a Soviet context, perhaps, there was little Soviet reaction to its publication, other than the predictable one of describing it as an expression of Reagan's policy of seeking superiority and confrontation.³⁸

Thus a Soviet discussion of "war termination" from a military point of view is necessarily inhibited by the fact that the subject is controlled by politics.

Finally, from the geopolitical/historical/cultural context we take only one example. Soviet planning has, until recent times, been based upon a cultural history of insufficiency, of having to figure out how to win from an inferior position with inferior technology and inadequately educated personnel. Because of this, it has searched for methods for achieving victory through emphasis on psychological manipulation and control. The fear of Soviet shortages and the assumption of technological inferiority to the West has become part of the cultural consciousness and that undoubtedly affects estimates of the ability to fight wars and to prevail.

On the other hand, the U.S. faces the planning of military problems from the opposite position of not just having a sufficiency, but even expecting an excess of materiel. World War II was an excellent example of this when the United States and its

³⁸ David Alan Rosenberg gives a very well-reasoned analysis, showing an unusual understanding of the Soviet context, in an article entitled, "It Is Hardly Possible to Imagine Anything Worse: Soviet Reactions to the Maritime Strategy", Naval War College Review, Summer, 1988

allies, to Stalin's enormous dissatisfaction, could wait to launch the Normandy invasion when completely ready for attack. The Soviets did not experience the luxury of choosing their own timing for attack until after the Battle of Stalingrad, January 31, 1943.

The U.S. tends to plan its strategy on the basis of technological and logistical superiority, a strategy of inundating the enemy, as General Eisenhower described it.³⁹ Frequently, in our strategic culture, anxiety is experienced when less is available.⁴⁰

Undoubtedly, these aspects of our strategic cultures have played an important role in bringing the Soviets to the position of adopting a new doctrine of defense, a kind of ideological termination of war as the engine of change. As the Soviet strategic culture emphasizes the economic base for war and as the Soviets have acknowledged the inadequacy not only of their economy but also of their system to support the high-tech requirements of modern industry (including, presumably, defense industry), their own internal reality contradicts their strategic

³⁹ General Dwight D. Eisenhower, in Crusade in Europe, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948), p. 4, described American strategic culture as one in which an enemy would be overwhelmed by our capabilities.

⁴⁰ We only need to make reference to the periods of our various "bomber", "missile", and "vulnerability" gaps to illustrate this point. See Samuel F. Wells, Jr., "Sound the Tocsin: NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat", International Security, Fall 1979, Vol. 4, No. 2.

doctrine.⁴¹ And as the U.S., following its own strategic culture, intends to maintain its superiority in numbers and technology, threatening to do so, with SDI, even in the face of economic hardship, the Soviets could not foresee, in the present competition, a time when there would be a favorable correlation of forces. Their process orientation clearly has led to a radical, paradigmatic, shift; the U.S., following its strategic culture, waits for the numbers to provide incontrovertible evidence of change.

II. Some Applications:

Cross-Cultural Translation

A translation aid is needed not for moving from one word or idea to the other, but for deciphering contexts. This paper proposes to examine the usefulness of applying some of the concepts from strategic culture to Soviet/American approaches to the problems of war termination. In some sense, this represents a methodological experiment as there are few models to follow for such an effort. That it is essential to explore such an important subject cross-culturally is obvious. War termination, like

⁴¹ S. A. Bartenev, Economicheskoye protivoborstvo v voyne, (Moscow: Voenizdat', 1986) appears to be emphasizing the factors which "compensate for" and "equalize" imperialist economic superiority in war. He specifically refers to the Viet Nam war as one which shows those psychological factors which bring victory over superior forces. P. 54.

deterrence, depends upon perception and thus it occurs in the mind before it occurs on the battlefield.

But as there is a national style to fighting wars, so must there be a national style for terminating them. In his pioneering work, Strategic Surrender, Paul Kecskemeti illustrated the different national approaches to ending World War II. His study, without identifying strategic culture as such, provided the data for deriving some of its elements in war termination.

That a study of political, and then strategic, culture is absolutely essential as a preliminary for discussing war termination can hardly be doubted. There is a dichotomy between the literature on war termination, which generally argues in terms of rational decisions based upon numerical assessments, and the experience of how decisions are made in extremis. With respect to nuclear war, for instance, J. Kahan asserts that:

Psychologists, systems analysts, and political analysts generally agree that despite all the training in decision analysis, principled problem solving, or any other systematic technique, a primary driving force in decisionmaking will be largely intuitive. When high-level decisionmakers react to scientifically drawn analyses of potentially crucial situations, they almost universally reach back to personal experience, historical situations, or institutional knowledge when evaluating the analysis.⁴²

President Harry Truman seems to have fulfilled that pattern. On the basis of notes "shaped" into a book had the preconception that the Japanese were "fanatical" and that to bring the war to

⁴² J. Kahan, et al., Preventing Nuclear Conflict: What Can The Behavioral Sciences Contribute?, (Santa Monica: Rand Corp., 1983), p. 84.

an end, he would have to order the atomic bomb dropped on populated centers. He decided against a demonstration drop, "....feeling it wouldn't be enough to convince the fanatical Japanese."⁴³

There are many examples of cross-cultural asymmetries in Russian military history. In 1812, after a demonstration of supremacy, Napoleon thought that his victory in the battle of Borodino and subsequent occupation of Moscow meant that Russia would concede total victory. Instead, that battle showed, on a military level, that even victory in a theater of war could mean a strategic defeat and on a political level, that Moscow is not Russia, even if, perhaps, Paris is France.

(There is a modern parallel. Napoleon's exhausted troops were surrounded in the center of the enemy's greatest physical and ideological strength with his supply lines stretched to their terminal weakness. The authors of *The Maritime Strategy* propose a somewhat similar campaign at sea.)

Hitler apparently did not learn from that defeat, for he managed in some respects to repeat it in 1941 with similar results. Underestimating the enormous Russian capacity for suffering, preterpelost' as Evgenii Evtushenko explained the cultural characteristic⁴⁴, and different value attached to human

⁴³ Harry S. Truman, "Why I Dropped the Bomb," from a book edited by Margaret Truman and Scott Meredith to be published by Warner Books. This excerpt appeared in Parade Magazine, December 4, 1988, p. 17.

⁴⁴ Evgenii Evtushenko, "Preterpelost'", Literaturnaya gazeta, May, 1988, p. 13.

life, he mistook the initial success of the drive toward Moscow for a premature victory and divided his forces.

One unifying element which can be extracted from these very complex events was that of cultural preconceptions playing a major part in military decisions. Both Hitler and Napoleon assumed that capturing Moscow would defeat Russia. The U.S. assumed that the atomic bomb would force Japanese capitulation in 1945. Paul Kecskemeti argued that for the Japanese the bomb did not play an absolutely decisive role.⁴⁵ The Japanese were concerned with their cultural survival as much as with their physical survival and apparently some leaders might have chosen annihilation if the emperor were not spared.

The Soviet explanation of the reason for the Japanese surrender is bizarre, but it shows the power of ethnocentric analysis as well as a problem in cross-cultural semiotics. Reflecting the influence of their military science upon reality, the Soviets argue that it was not the atomic bomb which caused the capitulation but the surprise of the Soviet attack, its overwhelming force and the resulting disorientation of the leadership.⁴⁶ Semiotically, the Soviets did not respond to Emperor Hirohito's vague signals nor did they accept that the Japanese had surrendered until there was absolutely no resis-

⁴⁵ Paul Kecskemeti, Strategic Surrender--The Politics of Victory and Defeat, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958.)

⁴⁶ A. M. Vasilevskiy, Delo vsey zhizni, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1984) p. 472.

tance. (Following Soviet military thought, the war was pursued until the enemy's ability to make war was destroyed.)⁴⁷

The idea of "escalation dominance" is an example of the problem of understanding cultural [semiotic] signs. In the American usage, the term implied a set of signals that would be mutually understood with or without explanation. That implied a clarity and reliability of intentions which the Soviets consistently doubted, such as the idea of limited nuclear war. The usefulness of the idea depended, almost entirely, upon the context of American strategic planning which was projected onto the Soviets. But the Soviet context was, and remains, entirely different. Where Americans tend to see the war as unfolding in specific phases--and therefore try to fit Soviet strategy into that structure--the Soviets experience a process, the whole war, once set in motion, moving towards its inevitable and scientifically predetermined, conclusion. The conceptual conflict is between the dualistic, action-response interpretation and the organic multi-context one. The one has difficulty understanding the other. As Genrikh Trofimenko charged, our military spokesmen "fail to explain what these Pentagon scenarios have in common with actual Soviet strategy."⁴⁸

The Soviet Context of War Termination:
The Military Concept of Victory

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 474-475.

⁴⁸ Genrikh Trofimenko, The U.S. Military Doctrine, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1986), p. 143.

For all Soviet military writers, the course and outcome of war are judged by the political goals.⁴⁹ The roots of this idea are, of course, Marxist and confirmed by Lenin quoting Clausewitz who sees war as a form of political action. And politics, of course, is the province of the Politburo, not the military. Thus, in the modern political culture of the Soviet state, victory is taken out of the hands of the military since it must be defined by the politicians.

While military writers can speak of victory in past wars, they seldom use the term pobeda when speaking of present and future wars. (Even the concept of "partial victory" [chastnaya pobeda] mentioned by Gareyev was not further defined, although he referred to it as a principle.⁵⁰) Instead, they often refer to "the outcome of armed combat" or the achievement of strategic goals (which may be theater goals.) To understand this, we must refer, briefly, to the structure of Soviet military thought.

As Marx uncovered the scientific laws which govern the study of man, all categories of knowledge, including the military, must be pursued in the Soviet Union as if on a scientific base. The research that must be conducted, the inquiries to be answered,

⁴⁹ Soviet Minister of Defense, D. T. Yazov, ritually repeated this position, in spite of glasnost' and "new thinking" in his book, Na strazhe sotsializma i mira, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987), p. 11, saying, "The Party leads the development and implementation of military doctrine, determines the main directions of military organizational development and the development of the armed forces."

⁵⁰ M. A. Gareyev, M. V. Frunze-Voennyi teoretik. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985) p. 239.

therefore have to do with uncovering the laws and principles which are known to exist but which have not been revealed.

The effect of this approach is to isolate military theory from other categories, to make it become a "thing in itself." Thus, military theory tends to deal with "raw" power, as Trofimenko calls it ⁵¹, totally subordinate to, but somewhat isolated from, the political culture. It is rather like the relationship between highway engineering and environmental law.

The strategic, like the political culture, has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. In its vertical dimension, it is extremely compartmented hierarchically. "Those who need to know, know" and if you do not, you should not ask.⁵² In its horizontal dimension, it has to be reconnected with the ideology, and that appears to be the job of the Main Political Administration of the Armed Forces, and the Politburo and its organs, such as the Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies. Thus, the military analysis of war termination is a technical/scientific one, but in the political subordination.

The Science of War Termination

We can get some sense of the power of the ideology to control military, even scientific, ideas from a mathematical study by K. V. Tarakanov, one of the founders of Soviet decision-making theory. His book, devoted to the consideration of

⁵¹ Trofimenko, op. cit., p. 6.

⁵² Edward Keenan, "Muscovite Political Folkways," Russian Review, vol. 45, no. 2, 1986, pp. 115-118.

mathematical methods for research in armed combat, makes some precise definitions.⁵³ He identifies as the first "law-governed pattern of armed combat" as that the course and outcome depend upon the political goals of war. He then makes a leap of faith which is extremely significant, for he writes:

The dependence of the course and outcome of armed combat on the war's political goals especially characteristically appears in the strategic scale: even in conditions of extremely unfavorable quantitative correlation of forces, with stable equal conditions, victory goes to the side which is conducting a just war.⁵⁴

In Soviet military science, there is room for ambiguity. It occurs between the concept of military science or laws and military art. Both support the thesis from Marx and Lenin, that there are in war objective relationships "independent of the knowledge and will of man"⁵⁵. Military art finds theoretical ways to interpret these relationships and through those interpretations, law-governed patterns are discovered.

It is difficult then, within the scientific study of armed combat for Soviets to deal with war termination since the basic outcome of war, understood to be a contest between social classes and systems, cannot be doubted.

⁵³ K. V. Tarakanov, Matematika i vooruzhennaya bor'ba, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974.) Translated by SCITRAN F33657-78-D-0619, FTD. p. 23.

⁵⁴ Ibid. This author has edited some obvious mistakes in the text.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 10.

Defeat, as previously mentioned, is almost never discussed in Soviet military writing. Although, with glasnost' political shortcomings are admitted, there have not yet been similar confessions from the military sector. Apparently that will come after Stalin is attacked as a wartime leader.

The context of Soviet thought--organic and process oriented--is not conducive to the contemplation of defeat. Attention is on the whole battle, the outcome of the theater operations, and not the parts. Second, as war is a manifestation of historic political processes, defeat is not scientifically possible. And finally, on the semiotic level, discussion of defeat would signal the possibility of the fallibility of the system and its leaders, something the political and ideological cultures do not accept.⁵⁶

Thus, the Soviet military discussion of victory is about decisiveness in armed combat which must be offensive for an army fulfilling a political doctrine which is defensive. (It is very likely that the new defensive strategy will evolve out of a redefinition of these terms.) Clearly, if the study of war is indeed scientific, then termination cannot be scientifically studied without great theoretical difficulty.

⁵⁶ It is very likely that, until the present, any effort to wargame scenarios which resulted in anything but victory would, even under conditions of glasnost', result in even more severe party criticism than Senator Russell tried to impose forbidding the Department of Defense to spend a dime "in any way which even contemplates the surrender of this country to those who would destroy us." Quoted by James E. King, Jr., in his review of Paul Kecskemeti, Strategic Surrender, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), in World Politics, Vol. XI, April 1959, no. 3, p. 418.

In the traditional view, "a decisive victory over the enemy [is achieved with] offensive operations," according to Tarakanov. "They have the greatest effect when there is a superiority of forces and equipment," is a self-evident universal law or principle, it would seem, which the Soviets do not tire of repeating. There is even an equation for decisiveness, or victory, in armed combat:

$$R=f_r(r_1,r_2,r_3,r_4,r_5)$$

where R is the decisiveness of armed combat and $r_1....r_5$ relate to the tasks, scale, quantity, pace, and offensiveness of the operation.⁵⁷

The concept is not obviously sophisticated. In fact, it seems to be based on the Soviet experience of World War II, but only, of course, after the Battle of Stalingrad. In this connection, it is useful to observe that when Soviet military spokesmen denounce the United States' search for superiority, they are repeating the political more than the military line. The military position is, of course, that given a correlation of forces, a plan is then formulated for winning in combat which produces effective superiority.

Science vs. Politics

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 24.

In considering the Soviet scientific approach to war, the rhetoric, so dry, repetitive and self-confident, can itself be deceptive, for its scientific base seems to be built on political sand. The initial position for the equation, the values during the course of the operation and the period of termination, are all determined by politics. There may certainly be laws, but there are also theorems and it would perhaps be less misleading to call the law-governed patterns simply theories of war.

A second problem Soviet military theorists have in dealing with war is that both the political doctrine and the ideology require Soviet forces to be theoretically defensive. The formula, endlessly repeated with minor variations, can hardly be ignored:

. . . [there] have arisen new kinds of wars, wars for the defense of the socialist Motherland. Their causes do not come from the nature and politics of socialist governments, but from the politics of imperialism, from its efforts to hold back the due process of socialist development of society. A war in the defense of socialism is not motivated by the desire to seize others' territory or for the enslavement of the peoples of other countries, but for the defense of freedom and independence of the government of the workers and peasants. For that reason, such a war is, to the very highest degree, just and bears, inevitably, a revolutionary character.⁵⁸

We shall find, in discussing war termination in Soviet society, that there will be this constant, and often contradictory, interplay between culture and theory. For example, in the former, there is no hesitation to use guile, deception and if

⁵⁸ N. V. Ogarkov, Vsegda v gotovnosti k zashchite otechestva, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982), p. 11.

necessary capitulation to reduce the risks from an enemy; in the latter, since reality is determined by an unending interplay of contradictions, there is no scientific concept for an absolute termination.

The problem of considering war termination is further complicated by the Soviet ideological categories of war. In this case, war is the engine of change and its victory is an economic as well as a military confirmation of a superior system. The object of all wars is to advance the cause of socialism. Those are the just wars. The unjust wars are fought to delay the advancement of socialism. Even wars between contending {non-socialist} classes are to be judged and fought for their contribution to social advancement.

However, in the seventy-year history of the Soviet Union, while aid and scientific, military advice have been often given to advance the cause of socialism, wars have been fought primarily for reasons of security. Even the 1919-1920 war against Poland, initiated under the belief that the Polish working class would join the Soviet internationalist movement, was fought to preserve strategic territory the Soviets considered theirs.

The ideological resolution of the problem was a kind of socialist megalomania in which it was argued that just wars were those which increased the power of the socialist heartland, the arsenal of the working class, to perform its internationalist duty. Victory, then, could not be separated from ideology and as World War II showed, "nationalism", even after the Bolsheviks had

nearly erased it, was what could drive the Russians to supreme self-sacrifice, not a foreign ideology.

Sufficiency and Science

The problem with any science, as with all knowledge, is that it creates the categories into which information will be sorted, thus possibly prejudicing the solution. Thus, when the 27th Party Congress, and the Warsaw Pact, adopted the doctrine of "sufficiency", they gave the West a problem of interpretation which would have to rely upon political culture more than military science, for "sufficiency" is a culturally relative term.

As General Yazov explained:

The military might of the Soviet armed forces is based upon a level corresponding to the threat of aggression and with observance of the principle of sufficiency for defense. This means that the Soviet Union, like other socialist countries, does nothing in the area of developing and producing armaments beyond that which is essential for defense and which has just as much power and means as is essential for defense from attack from abroad.⁵⁹

To understand this new doctrine, it is necessary to estimate not only the Soviet Union's evaluation of the correlation of forces⁶⁰, but also its estimate of the threat, its psychology--

⁵⁹ D. E. Yazov, p. 34.

⁶⁰ The influence of Soviet military science on the study of war is apparent. Not only is it common in the West to talk about "the correlation of forces" but also it is becoming more frequent to see considerations of morale, production, efficiency of command, etc. to be taken into account in figuring the equation. Furthermore, the European concept of "operations" as a category between tactics and strategy seems finally to have found a place in American thought via, it can be presumed, Soviet military science. There is a good reason for this. As the problems of

what it deems necessary for security, what irrational suspicions and visions it creates--and its strategic culture.

Although the doctrine is presented as new, it is, in fact, a restatement of a decision that seems to have been made at the 11th Party Congress in 1922 and flows from the problem of whether or not there should be a sufficiency for defense or, presumably, an excess for exporting revolution, or at least defending it abroad. The debate, in which Trotsky argued for the international revolution and Stalin for making the Soviet Union the arsenal of socialism, was part of the inevitable cycle of looking outward and then looking inward. And the pattern can be expected to continue since the legitimacy of the Marxist government is dependent upon the internal perception of some economic success and an external movement toward an internationalization of the proletariat.

Russia, has often faced the world from the "victim" position: it has had to be reactive to superior enemies with inferior resources. That has encouraged the Soviets to make maximum use of psychological maneuver just at the edge of the battlefield in order to equalize the odds and to survive.

The marshals of the Soviet Union, defense analysts and scholars, historians and politicians all begin their studies, on whatever aspect of war, with a kind of ritual whine about the evils of the surrounding world and the unfairness of reality and

war and peace focus more narrowly on the superpowers, they have to learn to speak, and interpret, each others' language. Inevitably, learning the words creates new concepts.

of history. This is what we are calling the "victim" position--the idea that to survive, one must suffer--which comes through very clearly as the Soviet view of itself. This could be called "the Port Arthur" syndrome, the persistence of the humiliation Russia experienced at the hands of the Japanese in 1905.⁶¹ (Stalin, in his World War II victory proclamation, had declared that "For forty years we, the men of the older generation, have waited for this day.")

It is obvious that in war termination, operating from this position, the Soviet Union would make decisions on information interpreted differently from the West. These would be influenced not only by the historical dimensions (which a culture grounded in the present does not sufficiently appreciate) but also by the emotionally indoctrinated vision of the United States as an aggressor who offends moral and historical world order. Here is Marshal Ustinov's ritual warning:

Aggressive circles in the USA and NATO, are aiming, in whatever way they can, to destroy the military strategic balance which has developed and to achieve military superiority over the USSR and Warsaw Pact Countries. They are trying to reduce the socialist countries to a state of siege and to push back the forces of national and social liberation.⁶²

The dynamics of the process has little to do with reason. Rather it is symbiotic. Since the Revolution, the West has been pictured as unremittingly aggressive and offensive. As Stalin

⁶¹ See William H. Luers, "Don't Humiliate Gorbachev," on the Op Ed page, N.Y. Times, Jan 30, 1989.

⁶² D. F. Ustinov, Serving the Country and the Communist Cause, trans. Penny Dole, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983,) p. 4.

clearly showed, the identification of enemies can be used to promote, expand and sustain political power. He reduced Russian political culture to a formula:

The history of old Russia consisted, among other things of being beaten for its backwardness.... If you fall behind and are weak, it means you are not right and you will be beaten and enslaved. If you are strong, it means you are right and that people must beware.⁶³

Some Cultural Asymmetries

The impossibility of discussing war termination between the superpowers from the point of view of only one of them is obvious. The result must inevitably be an exercise in which mirror-imaging plays a dangerous role as the temptation to fit Soviet phenomena into Western categories is automatic. This we experience annually in trying to present the strategic balance and the Soviets face in trying to determine the correlation of forces.

For example, our operational planning tends to be weapons oriented with lesser attention paid to the flanks and our allies. The Soviet demand for parity, which includes political equality as well, is essential to them from their victim position. However, it confronts the American political culture where there is a need to be the "best" and to have the "most". For us, security involves superior numbers.⁶⁴ In neither culture is the

⁶³ J. V. Stalin, Sochineniya, (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1951), Vol. 13, pp. 38-39.

⁶⁴ The history of "the numbers game" is very long indeed

idea of a balance of power comfortable. As both tend to be messianic, they do not recognize a natural equilibrium for other ideologies.

Asymmetries, certainly debatable, in which the two realities differ are suggested below:

U.S.

Soviet

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Plans bottom up (individual) | 1. Plans top down (scientific) |
| 2. Weapons driven | 2. Theory driven |
| 3. War in steps | 3. War as controlled chaos |
| 4. Minimize own casualties | 4. Maximizes sacrifice |
| 5. Geopolitics neglected | 5. Geopolitics dominates |
| 6. Time constricted | 6. Replays past into the future |
| 7. Assumes rationality | 7. Assumes subjectivism |
| 8. Depends on warning | 8. Assumes surprise |
| 9. Emphasizes command | 9. Emphasizes control |
| 10 Victory undefined | 10 Victory changes society |
| 11 Targets technically | 11 Targets geopolitically |
| 12 Violence graduated | 12 Violence maximized |
| 13 Current estimates dominate | 13 Focuses on the future |
| 14 Plans series of limited wars | 14 Doubts limited war |

but perhaps no more dramatic than in the Kennedy election of 1960 when the assertion that the Russians were ahead in missiles, although mistaken, apparently contributed to the Republican defeat. Margaret Mead comments on this American need for superiority in And Keep Your Powder Dry, (N.Y.: W. Morrow and Co., 1942,) p. 229._

Interpreting Asymmetries

Let us see how these asymmetries might affect problems of war termination:

1) As the Soviets function on the basis of command at the top, once a war has been set in motion, it will be difficult, if not impossible to stop. In case of decapitation, commanders are likely to continue automatically fulfilling their orders. "Initiative" in the Soviet armed forces means fulfilling missions no matter what the obstacles. Because in the U.S. authority is dispersed and alternating, in the event of the disruption of command communications, cultural conditioning encourages on-scene decisions and initiative. Although the U.S. command strictly controls nuclear release, individual judgment, influenced by cultural preconceptions, inevitably would play a powerful role for which there would not be a Soviet counterpart.

2) America's strategy of deterrence has promoted a weapons' policy of superiority through ever improved arms culminating in the enormous industrial and technological demands of SDI. Again the Soviets are being challenged to respond, as the Russians always have, from a position of industrial and technological inferiority. But this time, there was no alternative to quality and the traditional method of trial and error production with selective rejection according to priority demands did not keep up with the pace of technological change. That, in combination with the internal brain-drain forced a turn to a market economy.

The Soviets have benefitted from our technological preoccupation. We have often assessed their equipment through our mirrors with consequences in our estimate of the threat. As our minimal-context culture relies heavily on numbers, and as Soviets acting from the inferior position tend to retain even outmoded military equipment, our cultural patterns tended to support the preconceptions.⁶⁵ (See #6 below.)

Coming from the theoretical position, in war termination, the Soviets will believe, unless there are extreme measures of assurance, that U.S. proposals are disguises, like SDI, for surprise attack. They will be reasoning from looking in their mirror image that we are theory driven as well. Properly understood, this can be used politically, but improperly applied, it can unleash Soviet paranoia.

3) The disconnect between the Soviet and U.S. views of war in general is striking. U.S. planning in its logical and rational assumptions appears to insulate itself from the human element, preferring to deal with abstract modelling.⁶⁶ In contrast, the Soviets begin with psychological questions about the cohesiveness of the rear and strategies for disorganizing the

⁶⁵ It has been an occasional American experience to declare a new Soviet weapon the finest of its kind in the world, only to discover that it was crude, if effective. The Krivak destroyer was declared to be the most powerful ship of its size afloat; the Secretary of the Air Force described the MIG 25 as "probably the best interceptor in the world today." See Robert C. Seamans, Science, Vol. 212, 1973, p. 1012.

⁶⁶ Colin Gray discusses the "rational" style of American strategic culture in "National Style in Strategy," International Security, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1981, especially pp. 44-47.

enemy. Undoubtedly, consideration of the sheer magnitude of logistics problems (food, spare parts, repair facilities, distribution systems, clothes and heating equipment, etc.) act as an inhibiting factor in Soviet military initiative whereas in American plans, these items are assumed, for the most part, to be available, if not always organized. Everyday chaotic Soviet life reminds them that war, too, is chaos and their constant battle with ordinary supplies and hunger reminds them that war brings even more extreme suffering. For war termination this means that once war has begun, the Soviets will be making judgments from a different perspective than the Americans.

4) As an expression of the above idea, American calculations on the effects of casualties do not correspond with Soviet attitudes. We learned something about the effect of these cultural differences during the war in Viet Nam when the North Vietnamese continued to operate under conditions which we estimated to be unacceptable. America's culture is to protect human life and to be very cautious about committing itself to operations with large losses. The Soviet culture, at least in World War II, was to sustain large losses even for small gains. War is only won with extreme sacrifice and the risk and expenditure of equipment. A traditional element of Russian masculinity is to be able to die for the fatherland even for no reason without protest and without showing fear.⁶⁷ In other words, the

⁶⁷ Soviet and Imperial Russian memoir literature frequently refers to the waste of human life by senior commands, of attacks ordered without preparation or ammunition, etc. For example,

Soviets can be expected to sustain far greater losses than the Americans before they consider moves toward war termination clearly indicated.⁶⁸

5) It is odd that U.S. strategic culture seems to be, in the 20th century, abstracted from considerations of geopolitics. Our wars in Viet Nam and Korea are striking examples. Furthermore, we accepted the challenge for big wars there in areas of our least concern and greatest distance, while avoiding the same scale for the same kind of challenge in our home waters in Cuba and now in Nicaragua.

In any case, Soviet strategy is extremely sensitive to geopolitical considerations. We can see the difference just by comparing the two navies: the Soviet navy develops its operations on the basis of specific choke points, primarily in adjacent waters, and the U.S. navy its strategy on the basis of sea control.

In war termination, the Soviets are likely to be more prepared for agreement once a geopolitically defensible position has been achieved while the U.S. will probably, mistakenly, expect that some level of destruction will be the breaking point.

Kirill Uspensky--Kirill Kostsinskii, V teni Bolshogo Doma, (Tenafly, N.J.: Hermitage, 1987), p. 34--wrote about how much blood it cost to improve the military art of the leadership in World War II and concluded that "We won as we always had through the use of canon fodder."

⁶⁸ See Robert Conquest, The Great Terror, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968), pp. 515-535.

6) A major problem is that the U.S. tends to be so tied to its perceptions of the present that it will have difficulty taking into account the Soviet proclivity for experiencing the future and the past as having a current reality. In other words, the Soviets expect to be given credit for what they have planned, whether the plan is achieved or not.⁶⁹ This cultural characteristic would complicate all aspects of war termination discussions as the Soviets would be, probably, demanding credit for achievements which had not occurred such as their claim to have caused the capitulation of Japan. .

7) The problem resulting from the American assumption of "rationalism," and the Soviet perception of us as anachronistic and subjective has been mentioned. The most important effect of this on war termination is that Soviets will not estimate that Americans are either reliable or sensible and Americans will not understand that Soviets are not irrational or incapable of trust but responding to their own values and historical perspectives. In the extreme, the danger is that the Soviet leadership will consider it useless to depend upon the reliability of American positions.

⁶⁹ Khrushchev was a prime purveyor of this aspect of Russian cultural reality, but Admiral Gorshkov and other military leaders display it as well. The former, for example, already in Seapower of the State claimed that the Soviet navy could locate submarines anywhere in the world's oceans, a claim that General Secretary Gorbachev implied at the end of the 1988 summit when he said that nuclear weapons could be detected on naval ships "whether surface or submarines...." Reported by Gregory Fossedal, "Have our subs become vulnerable?", Washington Times, January 22, 1988, p. F-4.

8) Ever since World War II, the Soviets have emphasized that the main law and principle of warfare, and more so as weapons increase in range and destructiveness, is surprise. If we understand properly the preeminence of theory in Soviet strategic culture, then it is clear that the Soviets have considered extensively how to initiate war without warning, and lacking that ability, they are unlikely to initiate war. In American strategic culture, on the other hand, we have assured ourselves that war could not take place without warning. Obviously, the danger here is that the Soviets, preparing for surprise, will misinterpret the signals.

9) The point about the Soviet's emphasis upon iron control is that their forces are likely to carry out their missions to their end under conditions of loss of communications no matter what the logic of the situation might dictate. Furthermore, they are unlikely to respond to lateral control or to any commands other than through the established hierarchy. While Soviet military theorists are fully aware of the problems of this kind of organization under conditions of modern warfare, they will have great difficulty trying to change it.

Because the U.S. emphasizes command and allows initiative to weaken control, U. S. forces, especially under the same conditions, would, according to their own strategic culture, tend to perform the individualized "rational" act with commanders going their separate ways. In war termination, this could easily destroy any Soviet trust. On the other hand, the U. S. would

have difficulty understanding the seriousness of the Soviet assurance, as about limited use of nuclear weapons, for instance, that once a chain of events has been set in motion, it must proceed to its inevitable conclusion.

10) That the U.S. does not have a plan or trained personnel for a post-victorious Eastern Europe will surely introduce enormous problems and confusion. A Soviet strength is that its objective is known to everyone, to change the political system and to eliminate the traditional centers of power and control. That means that the Soviets would engage in war termination discussions with alternative leaders and would not, in all probability, feel constrained to keep agreements with traditional power centers that were, in any case, to be discarded by history.

11) While it is claimed that U.S. targeting is more subtle than it was in the early sixties when all communist nations would have been simultaneously under attack, the logic of American political culture is that targets will be chosen for technical and military significance with lesser attention to manipulation for political goals in war termination: for example, to influence Ukrainian separatism or Karelian irredentism. This is partly a function of our minimal-context culture in which we think of the Soviet Union as one whole and not as a conglomerate of tens of nationalities. Soviet strategic culture is different from American with regard to weapons. In the Second World War, bombing was primarily used as part of combined operations and

not, as the Western powers used it, to demoralize populations.⁷⁰ Although the guerrilla war in Afghanistan might challenge this argument, objectives were not usually people but military targets. Soviet commentators pretend not to understand U.S. counterforce, countervalue arguments, considering them transparent disguises for plans for a sudden strike. (Soviet interpretations of American strategic war plans since the days of the Dulles "Massive Retaliation" have quite consistently assessed American decisions as a search for the ultimate weapon to use for a first strike.⁷¹)

Calculations of victory based upon percentages of dead and destroyed, such as the Herman Kahn sort of reasoning, are simply not found in Soviet military writing and would appear to be alien to Soviet thought.⁷² (This does not imply that the Soviets would not employ massive attacks on the U.S. homeland if that were judged to be an operational or political necessity as the January 1989, Moscow meeting about the Cuban Missile Crisis showed. The threshold principle needs to be applied here. Once nuclear strikes begin, Soviet responses would be, according to the strategic culture, massive, and presumably extremely destruc-

⁷⁰ See, for example, G. K. Zhukov, Reminiscences and Reflections, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), 2 vols., vol. 2, p. 273.

⁷¹ See V'yunenکو, op. cit., p. 11, for a traditional statement of this position.

⁷² Trofimenko, p. 118.

tive, but part of an operational plans with specific objectives. Traditionally, Soviet psychological operations on civilian targets occur in the phase of war before fighting begins.⁷³⁾

12) The above point emphasizes the asymmetry that the Soviets have consistently rejected the American notion that the violence of war can somehow be controlled. It is quite probable that they have advertised this position as a deterrent to American aggression, to make us understand that escalation dominance cannot be a practical concept. It is also quite evident that the Soviets have plans for lesser levels of violence than all-out nuclear war certainly in the Western TVD and its flanks.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Soviet strategic culture is heavily weighted toward the use of mass and maximum violence, especially when those responses are not expected by the enemy. It is in this way, by stunning the opposition, making him unable to think or act, that wars, according to Soviet theory, are won.

13) The weight of the factor of time has been discussed. It appears again in considering estimates. Because the Soviets

⁷³ Evidence that Soviets targeted cities, rather than military objectives during the 60's when they possessed few ICBM's appears to be coming from the Moscow conference on the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, op.cit., N. Y. Times, January 29, 1989, p. 1.

⁷⁴ See the "Voroshilov Lectures" and subsequent papers. These are a series of papers resulting from interviews and cooperative writing with former Afghani colonels, Jalali and Wardak and retired colonel John Sloan, based on lectures given at the Voroshilov and Frunze Academies in the 70's. The results of this work have been published by the Science Applications International Corporation and the Soviet Army Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

are very oriented toward the future, they, of course, project the same tendency onto their enemies. Thus American plans for SDI, however tentative, increase the current threat and confirm, for the Soviets, the permanence of aggressive intent.

The U.S. tends to project the present situation into a kind of permanent future while the Soviets are busy trying to impose the future onto the present. In war termination, the U.S. will tend to underestimate the rapidity of change while the Soviets will be making agreements with a private knowledge that they are invalid, such as the agreement for Polish democratic elections after the Second World War, SALT I and the advent of MIRVed missiles, the Helsinki Accords, and so on.

We can apply this idea to the current moves for fundamental reorganization in the Soviet Union. Although revolutionary changes are being proposed, they are in basic contradiction to Russian political folkways. There is little doubt that the system will be significantly modified, but there is also little doubt that there will eventually be a conservative revanche in the cycle of change.

(We have had an example of that in the recent past. There were any expert predictions during the Khrushchev years that the Soviet Union could not return to Stalinism, but by 1967, political prisoners were again entering the camps. In the quite legitimate excitement about Soviet changes, it is easy to forget that those, too, are the consequence of Russian cultural ways and take place within that context and not our own.)

14) In conclusion, the most important asymmetry has already been addressed: the problem of limited wars or limited weapons use. Given the two, contending political and strategic cultures, it is very unlikely that in a war there would be any chance that there would be stable, agreed limits imposed by any condition other than individual perception of advantage.

III. Applying the Theory:

The Semiotics of Termination

We have seen that the U.S. and NATO concept in a war with the Soviet Union, to assert control at the lowest level of violence, is in fundamental conflict with Soviet strategic culture. It is more difficult, but extremely important, to demonstrate that it is not congruent with the structure of Soviet thought about war; i.e., that it cannot be integrated into the Soviet context of war.

We have already considered the idea that Soviet/Russian culture, starting from the multi-context position, tends to view any social engagement as taking place in a complex circle of interacting events. On the other hand, the U.S., being a minimal context culture, prefers to study an event insulated to the extent that is possible, from surrounding events. (An excellent example of the process is The Maritime Strategy.)

The Soviets, then, in thinking about war, start from the high ground of interpreting each event as a sign signalling a

change in the whole. On the international scale, this conflict of cultures occurs between the Soviet Union and the United States with respect to SDI. In the last three Summit meetings, President Reagan has urged General Secretary Gorbachev to consider SDI out of the context of Soviet-American parity, but, of course, without success.⁷⁵

This kind of difference in thought, originating in unlike systems, necessarily operates at all levels of the interaction between the two cultures. For example, it is implicit in The Maritime Strategy that the Soviets will understand that the attacking forces are planning not to use unconventional weapons. In a "limited" European war, it is assumed that if anti-tank, tactical nuclear weapons are used that the Soviets will recognize that cities and other groupings will not be attacked, at that stage.

Like the idea of non-provocative defense, these are semiotic concepts. Their validity depends upon a mutually recognized and consistently interpreted code which the two sides periodically reconfirm. The Soviet pledge of no first use of nuclear weapons was an example of an attempt to establish rules for the game but it was a pledge which NATO could not take up.

We see how these signs, when not consistent with the context, give false, therefore dangerous, signals. In 1972, President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev signed an agree-

⁷⁵ See summary report, The New York Times International, June 2, 1988, p. A6, for example.

ment called "The Basic Principles of U.S.-Soviet Relations." The understanding was that war could not be used to solve problems. However, the U.S. understood "war" to include revolutions and intervention. The Soviet Union did not understand "war" to include national liberation or battles to protect the gains of socialism. Subsequent events in Ethiopia, Angola, and Afghanistan set America off on its anger chain which could, in a non-nuclear age, have led to war.

Another Soviet effort to establish semiotic agreement has been the ubiquitously affirmed assurance that any use of nuclear weapons would lead to global war. To make the threat clearer, Soviet military spokesmen have added, ominously, that the U.S. could not expect to escape unharmed. In terms of the strategic culture, these statements should be taken seriously for they fit the threshold pattern of Soviet thought: avoid war at all costs but if it begins use maximum force.

The Soviet Defense Minister's, Marshal Akhromeyev's, July 1988 visit to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was almost entirely a recognition of the need for additional semiotic assurances and resulted in agreements for mutual visits, inspections, and exchanges.

The Language of Signs

In the rush for joint ventures, even businessmen are learning about the problems of cultural understanding. They have learned that for Soviets, "to invest" means to give money for

their use and that there is only one word to translate all of the different English words for "profit."

For example, many words which can be unambiguously translated into the two languages, change their meanings in different contexts. We have seen that this is true of concepts of victory. It is also true of "strategy" and "strategic". There is no specific Soviet naval, air or ground forces strategy since Soviet use of the word does not pertain to services but to military problems and their solutions. The Soviet use of the word "strategic" is a good example of the difference between multi-context and minimum-context thought. Whereas in our war colleges, we have had to make do for many years with the falsely dichotomous "tactics" and "strategy", the Soviets have had "tactics", "operations" and "strategy."

Because of the complications of modern war (some tactical operations can solve strategic problems, for example), they have inserted new levels to the hierarchy so that now, there are "tactics", "tactical operations," "operations," "strategic operations" and "strategy." In addition, there seems to be an extension of the notion of "strategy" to include "limited strategy" which perhaps corresponds with the as yet unclear notion of General Gareyev's of "partial victory."⁷⁶

⁷⁶ M. A. Gareyev, op. cit. The notion of "partial victory" undoubtedly has to do not only with the changes in the nature of war but also with revised Soviet political perceptions. For example, the incohesiveness of the international working class is a major blow to Soviet military, as well as ideological, thought. Furthermore, the failure of the Soviet economy to maintain the military-industrial lead has grave consequences, from the Marxist

In this regard, we must take note of our initial distinction between military technical and scientific analysis and the political/ideological one. When "strategy" is used technically, it has to do with quite concrete concepts such as geographical areas, weapons, sizes of forces, and objectives. When used with more political connotations, the strategy probably proceeds from the military/political Defense Council and not the General Staff.

This dependence on context for defining strategy also makes a difference in how Soviets designate strategic forces. For instance, the doctrine of "no first use" means that strategic nuclear forces cannot be called "strategic attack forces".⁷⁷

Semiotics and Politics

In a multi-context system, the power of classification to affect decisions is enormous because thought patterns become so enmeshed. Thus, although Sweden is staunchly neutral, because of its bourgeois inclinations, the Soviets obviously expect its wartime role to be hostile to Soviet interests. Operational plans are consequently created and tested, most obviously by Soviet submarines, for that contingency in spite of the degree to which less stable classifications, such as nuclear free zones, are affected.⁷⁸

point of view, for Soviet successes in war.

⁷⁷ N. V. Ogarkov, Istoriya uchit bditel'nosti, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985), p. 77.

⁷⁸ The admission to the Swedish Moscow correspondent that the submarines were sent on intelligence missions by the Soviet Defense Ministry very probably because it did not trust Swedish neutrality was one of the wonderful revelations of glasnost'.

As the origin of war is in the social system, so must its termination be in the social system. As Marshal Ogarkov wrote:

The fundamental contradiction of the present era is the contradiction between socialism and imperialism. One of its sharpest manifestations is the aggressiveness of imperialism in its relationship with socialism. Imperialism depends upon the strength of its weapons to turn backwards the course of history, to strangle the government of the workers, to restore its former global domination.⁷⁹

It is obvious that war termination cannot be studied abstracted from the economic (and political) stage of the contestants involved. This, of course, is Soviet doctrine which has been reaffirmed as the correct line since Lenin.⁸⁰ This is one of the major asymmetries between the Soviet and American approaches to war termination. The Soviets charge the bourgeois West with not understanding the dependence of doctrine on politics, of confusing the issue of approaching the study of war from a stage of subjectivism.

This leads to major problems in prediction: if a doctrine is based upon scientific laws, wartime behavior is predictable if the principles of application are understood; if the doctrine is

Nevertheless, the admission was a likely illustration of the role the concept of class orientation can play in determining Soviet military missions. The Soviet admission was reported by Arve Hoff, Aftenposten, June 30, 1988, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Ogarkov, p. 11.

⁸⁰ One of the current statements is by the Minister of Defense, D. E. Yazov, op. cit., p.29. "Doctrine reflects the politics of a given specific government in the military field of knowledge and flows from that."

based upon subjectivism, then wartime behavior is unpredictable, capricious, and irrational. Under such circumstances, the West has the advantage in being able to estimate Soviet operations (if it has done its cross-cultural homework), but it would be unable to control their levels of violence since the Soviets would not adopt the West's "rationality".

Some Possibilities

In case of war with the Soviet Union, what policy does our analysis of the two strategic cultures suggest?

1. First and most important, we should understand that the Soviets have assumed for thirty years that nuclear war would cause their complete destruction and yet they have organized militarily, industrially and intellectually to fight such a war. Whether or not this is an example of what Edmund Wilson called the strange Russian penchant for self-immolation, it should cause us to take seriously that the Soviets have been prepared for the execution phase of a nuclear war plan and that once war was initiated, according to their doctrine, it would be very difficult to stop.

The Soviet expectation that even limited war would lead to nuclear global war would probably be a self-fulfilling prophecy. In any case, the statement tells us about Soviet preconceptions. As the Soviet assurance is consistent with the strategic culture, any Western proclivity to dismiss the Soviet statement as propaganda on the grounds that it does not reflect a rational (mirror) image.

2. Although the idea may seem somewhat alien to our minimal context culture, war termination with the Soviets can be practiced intellectually in advance. The idea comes from chess where the object is to foresee and avoid checkmate the structural pattern of Soviet thought.

The Soviets must first fight their wars, if they have that chance, from an ideological position. Therefore, there is the possibility of fighting the war on a theoretical, gaming (negotiating), level. That is the process which appears to be underway with arms reduction negotiations and bi-lateral communications on various levels.

For example, because the Soviets believe that military art is fundamentally a scientific study and that while war may be controlled chaos the opening phase can be scientifically described provided a surprise change in the correlation of forces is not achieved, they would not begin a war unless their calculations were favorable. Part of the meaning of deterrence is to keep the calculations unfavorable, but that is through the threat of confrontation which carries with it the danger of misinterpretation and preemption.

There could be another approach. The newest Soviet doctrine (and the debate is far from over) is for sufficient defense.⁸¹ In the strategic cultural chess, the U.S. and NATO would show

⁸¹ D. T. Yazov, Na strazhe sotsialisma i mira, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987), p. 34. It is significant that General Yazov's definition of sufficient defense included sufficient strength to turn to the attack and end the war according to traditional Soviet doctrine: to destroy the enemy's capability to make war.

enthusiastic interest in the concept and ask to participate in the scientific debate and in Soviet planning. The West could suggest what Soviet force levels could be in order not to appear aggressive and ask the Soviets to propose the composition of a purely defensive NATO force, etc.

The difference being suggested here is that war termination be achieved in advance, on the theoretical level by meeting Soviet doctrine, absorbing it, gaming it perhaps, and deflecting it. The object is to recognize that there will always be conflict, to accept that there can be no winners, and to insure that neither side is in a position to check the other.

With the new doctrine of designing Soviet forces for no first use of nuclear weapons, nonprovocative defense, and shaping the forces to make aggression impossible, the Soviets are already trying to establish the semiotic signs to insure conflict without issue. It is a good contest for us to join.

3. Should war come, and more importantly to avoid it, there needs to be a trained organization established in advance with which the Soviets would be likely to negotiate. It would be most effective if it were a mirror-image of the Soviet structure, a kind of shadow American politburo.

The Soviet reality, repeated at all levels of analysis, is that the American president and his cabinet are either the representatives or under the control of monopolistic, ruling

circles who direct a policy of imperialism.⁸² Soviet leaders seem to be willing to speak to the leading bankers and industrialists, such as the emeriti David Rockefeller and Thomas J. Watson, Jr., and assume that they, and others, like them, can control U.S. policy. Their assumption probably is that should America plan a first strike, these men could stop it.

It is important, therefore, to have, in advance, some notion of an arbitration system which both sides could "trust" and where both cultures would be understood. A shadow American Politburo could fulfill the function of an emergency bridge, a role the Occidental Oil president, Armand Hammar, already fulfills.

From the lessons of strategic culture, we understand that the level of trust will play a critical role in war termination. The idea of the threshold between war and peace and then between conventional war and nuclear war in war termination must be carefully respected. Crossing the threshold, for the Soviets, changes the reality to a new set of circumstances with different control features. Such a shadow politburo could be a final pressure valve for preventing the crossing of that threshold. .

⁸² It would be a mistake, it seems to me, to dismiss the rhetoric which the Soviet Union has promoted since 1917 as mere propaganda. Although it is propaganda, it defines the context and structure within which Soviet thought is channeled. See N. V. Ogarkov, Istoriya, pp. 3-26, for a heated presentation of the thesis.

4. As the great danger of the Soviets starting a war would be almost exclusively the Politburo's conviction that the U.S. was about to launch a first strike, it is extremely important in Russian culture to have multiple levels of reporting. No one level is trusted. Each must be checked and confirmed by others, and even then, as in the case of the opening of Operation Barbarossa, the information may not be believed.

5. As Soviet culture operates slowly from the top down in a multi-context way that condition enormously increases the possibilities of prediction for those trained in cross-cultural analysis. For example, when a new military doctrine is announced, it follows that the Soviet military hierarchy will first have to justify it theoretically, develop the military art and science and from that design the weapons and exercises. During the transition from the old to the new doctrine, there will be a very long period of considerable confusion camouflaged by a good deal of pokazukha (traditional Russian bluster and pretense) and a flood of theoretical writing in the Manilovshchina (grandiloquent) style. This period of enormous confusion for the entire military establishment can be prolonged through the concept of intellectual war termination. The point would be to introduce factors which would, for the Soviets, constantly change the correlation of forces, geopolitically and ideologically as well as in terms of weapons and their effects so that their scientific calculations would always be in a state of incompleteness. At the

very least, the U.S. can take advantage of the relative slowness of the Soviet bureaucracy.

6. The military must obviously continue developing methods for conveying signals that the Soviets will understand if it seriously plans operations like The Maritime Strategy or limited war of any kind. That involves considerable subtlety in Soviet political culture. It is also important that we prove, by some method, that we can control our forces under the various conditions of modern war. Soviet writings indicate that once nuclear war has begun, they do not believe communications can be reliably maintained or that the commander can know precisely what is happening. In case of war termination talks, Soviets will need assurance that authorities can control their strategic forces.

Under such conditions, as has been argued, the Soviet forces will be difficult to stop, but they would reliably do so if orders were received. The Soviets, however, assess American forces as somewhat uncontrollable. (A Soviet General Patton or Admiral Rickover is unimaginable.) For war termination, it would be important to give Soviets convincing evidence that orders would be carried out under the condition of adequate communications.⁸³

Termination Under Perestroyka

⁸³ A. V. Barabanshchikov, Voennaya pedagogika i psikhologiya, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1986,) p. 167, discusses the relative unreliability of American forces and the discipline and control of the Soviets.

The ideological base of the strategic culture of the Soviet Union is now changing. This is confirmed by a speech by the Soviet Foreign Minister and Politburo Member, E. Shevarnadze at a foreign ministry conference on perestroyka, and reported in many Soviet publications. Quite simply, the new thinking is a revision of the doctrine that has been fundamental in Soviet military thought, the doctrine of permanent class struggle. He said:

If humanity is capable of surviving today solely in conditions of peaceful coexistence, and it is definitely incapable of ensuring itself a future in the conditions of permanent confrontation, then should we not conclude that the rivalry between the two systems can no longer be viewed as the leading tendency of the modern age?The ability to augment material boons rapidly on the basis of advanced science and engineering and distribute them fairly, and to restore and defend through joint efforts the resources needed for the survival of humanity is becoming a matter of decisive importance at the present stage.⁸⁴

From the same conference, even more fundamental views were voiced, views which would revise the very foundations of Marxism, its thesis on the inevitability of class warfare. It was reported that:

It is all the more strange to talk about the irreconcilable interests of states with different social systems now that even the class conflicts within capitalist countries largely take place through the achievement of compromise within a mutually accepted legal framework rather than in the form of harsh confrontation. It follows that the Soviet workers' solidarity with their class brothers in the West far

⁸⁴ E. Shevarnadze, "The 19th All-Union CPSU Conference: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy," International Affairs, no. 10, 1988, p. 15.

from justifies the thesis of global class confrontation.⁸⁵

The very possibility of the official sanction for such revisionism, and that they were reported in Pravda makes it clear that there are powerful forces operating against the traditional centralized strategic culture and thought of the Soviet Union. Inevitably introduced are new ideas about the nature of war, the international brotherhood of the soldier-proletariat, and the nature of war termination. The new military doctrine will not, apparently, seek to impose the Soviet system as a condition for ending a war.

Scientific planning for war termination must be affected in other ways. Take just the problem of the enemy. The enemy is theoretically determined to be the leader of the imperialist powers which means the economic leader. That, of course, has been the United States; however, that picture has been confused by the Japanese economic surge and the transfer of considerable weight in the economic balance to the Pacific Basin and to Europe. The Soviet's strategic culture, which orients itself more to the future than to the present, can no longer concentrate its planning so heavily on the United States which is being gradually displaced as the monolithic enemy. In a period of economic and technological decline, the resurgence of the specter of the need of sophisticated strategic defense on two fronts--

⁸⁵ A. V. Kozyrev, "Why Soviet Foreign Policy Went Sour," adapted from Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn', New York Times, January 7, 1989, p. 17.

Europe and Asia--must be so alarming that it will necessarily lead to new alliances.

Second, and related, the Marxist ideology as it was translated into Soviet strategic culture has become considerably weakened by the failure of the Soviet system, not only in the USSR but also in Eastern Europe and China and the success, without revolution, of alternative socialist models such as in Scandinavia. Since in Soviet strategic culture, the most important element is not technology but morale (by which is meant control of the population's willingness to fight), the decline of the power of the ideology to define the enemy introduces a new weakness in Soviet military planning.

New Thinking

Lenin, in the October Revolution, achieved one of the most extraordinary victories in history, extraordinary, not only because it turned not only Russia but the whole world upside down, and it was fought with few weapons but words. That victory has influenced Soviet military thought to focus on the idea of the possibility of a cheap victory through the skillful psychological use of military and political power. When the theory became too divorced from reality, when Mathais Rust and the Afghans pointed out the emperor's new clothes, then Soviet military thought had to be, as it was so often in the past, reformulated.

What Gorbachev and his military leaders are now saying is that Soviet military science has been defeated by the problems of

the rear. It cannot achieve a socialist victory in modern war. The problem, as always, is with control. If the spotlight is so strong that the failures of the rear cannot be hidden, the enemy cannot be manipulated, then it will not be argued that an aggressive war can be won. We have pointed out that the Soviets are a "top-down" culture, one that cannot successfully function without a strong theoretical umbrella. In order to coordinate its functions, it must have a dominant "idea". When that idea weakens, the structure begins to fly apart.

The West now has a chance to terminate the war that has been inexorably approaching since 1945. Because of their own defeats and failures, the Soviets have gone into a retrenchment. They have, in their desperation, adopted programs which come from the opposite end of their political culture--openness, democracy and decentralization. Of course, in time, these changes will give way to a return to the old patterns, however much they are disguised as new. At that time, the Soviets will have come up with a new "idea" of how to achieve victory, a new coordinating doctrine. But in the interim, by shaping programs that capitalize on Soviet political and strategic culture, the West has a chance to help insure the permanent termination of the war the Bolsheviks have waged since 1917.

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